

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year A – First Sunday after Epiphany**  
**Lesson Plans for Younger Children**  
*Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One*

**Scripture: Isaiah 42:1-9**

**Unit background: What is Epiphany?**

The word Epiphany means “appearance” or “manifestation” of Christ to the gentiles. We think of revelation, insight or “shedding light” on who Christ was and is to us.

The feast day of Epiphany is January 6, concluding the Twelve Days of Christmas. We associate it with the arrival of the Wise Men; the Magi who followed the star, the light that led them to the Christ child. The symbol is usually the enlarged star over the manger in Bethlehem.

**Theme: The Light of God’s Promise**

The theme is about going from darkness into light, a common metaphor the prophets used to speak to God’s people. It is about opposites: light vs. dark; insight vs. ignorance; listening to God vs. not listening; following God vs. waywardness. The easiest way to explain to children is compare and contrast. God’s love is always there to direct us into the light of Christ by giving us guidelines on how to treat each other. This unit includes words of the prophets and the commandments.

**Before:** You will need various art supplies for the Activity/Response Options today. Look at the options below and choose which one/ones you want the children to do.

**Beginning:** Open your time together with singing. Choose one to use each session of this unit. It could give structure to sing the same song before the story as a cue to the children it is circle time. Suggested songs:

- This Little Light of Mine
- He’s Got The Whole World in His Hands
- The Hymnal 1982, #490 - I want to walk as child of the light
- Wonder Love and Praise, #787 – We are marching in the light of God

**Opening Prayer:** O God who is the Light of all peoples, all nations, we invite you to be with us as we share and explore today's lesson. Amen.

**The Story:**

People who lived before Jesus waited a long time for him to be born. While the people waited God began to get them ready to receive the gift of Jesus. God told particular people called prophets what was going to happen. Prophets listened to God in a special way. The prophets reminded the people of God’s love and the great things God had promised to do.

God spoke to Isaiah and told him about what was coming. God said: “I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a

covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.”

### **Exploring the Story:**

Let's look at these words of God. There are a few big words. What do you think righteousness means? (Give the children a chance to wonder and reflect what this word may mean.)

- Righteousness means to be set apart or special; to be right with God. What is a covenant? (Again, give the children a chance to wrestle with the word.)
- Covenant means agreement; the people of God agreed to be a light to the nations and God agreed to light the way. How do you think God shines light on the world?

### **Questions:**

- Does God want people to be blind and in darkness?
- How does light help us see?
- Who did God send so people can walk in the light?
- Many people think Jesus is the light to show us the way. Where do we find the light of God? (This is a point to introduce the star of Bethlehem and the wise men and/or look at a prism.)
- I wonder how Jesus shows us the way?

Today we have some activities to show us how light and dark are opposites; that God wants us to see the light and know the love God has for us.

### **Response/Activities with extra supplies needed**

**Free art** is always a good option; most will welcome a blank sheet of paper. Younger children cannot color in lines, but neither are they inhibited to freely express themselves. You may want to direct their color choices to include both light and dark colors.

**Star Mosaic** – contrast dark and light colors. Invite children to create stars with contrasting paper. As the children are creating, you can talk to them about how God created light out of the darkness as well.

- Have a piece of paper with a large star in the middle.
- Give them black and yellow paper strips that they can cut into squares.
- Glue onto paper with the black going on the outside of the star and the yellow going inside the star.

**Making crowns** – light of the stars. Invite the children to make crowns like the Wise Men wore.

- Have long strips of paper for crowns. You will need either tape or staples to attach the strips of paper into a circle fit for each child's head.
- Use stickers, sequins, glitter, etc. for decorating or color crowns before you make them into a circle.
- The story of the Wise Men can be read during decorating.

### **Blessing the Classroom Door** (see below for activity)

You can either do this here or at the end before the closing prayer.

### **Prism – Light to the World.**

- Have the children look at the different colors of light thru prism.
- Draw rainbows or make collogues that look like kaleidoscopes.
- Talk to children about when God created light; what a difference light makes

### **Games**

- Play Duck, Duck, Goose – change to Shepherd, Shepherd, King.
- Pin the star on the manger – have poster with manger, blindfold a child to pin star; need blindfold.
- Let there be Light – flashlight tag.

### **Closure/Prayer Time:**

Gracious God, please shine your Light on me today and everyday. Help me to share my Light with everyone. Amen.

### **This Week's Reading: Isaiah 42:1-9**

1 Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. 2 He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; 3 a bruised reed he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. 4 He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

5 Thus says the God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it: 6 I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, 7 to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. 8 I am the LORD, that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to idols. 9 See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

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**+Blessing of the Class  
Chalking of the Door**

**Oldest:** Peace to this dwelling and all who live and enter here.

A reading from Proverbs: “By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures (and memories).”

Gracious God, as a shining star once guided the magi to the birthplace of the infant Jesus, so enlighten those who enter and dwell here to be your light in the world; through Jesus Christ we pray. *Amen.*

The Holy Magi [*inscribing the initials*] Caspar [**C**], Melchior [**M**], and Balthasar [**B**], journeyed this way in the year 2014 [*inscribing the numerals before and after the monogram as follows*] [**20 C M B 14**] in search of the Holy Child, and having found Christ here, they departed with joy leaving their blessing on this house [*inscribing the four crosses as follows: 20+C+M+B+14*] in the Name of [+] the Father, [+] and of the Son, [+] and of the Holy Spirit. [+] *Amen.*

**(20 + C + M + B + 14)**

**Youngest:** A reading from the prophet Isaiah: “The effect of righteousness is peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness, and trust forever. My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and quiet places.”

**Oldest:** Bless, O Lord, this home and all who live here with your gracious presence, that your love may be our inspiration, your wisdom our guide, your truth our light, and your peace our benediction. Enlighten us with the brilliance of your Epiphany star so that, as we go into the world, we might clearly see our way to you and discover you in all we do. We ask through the King of Kings, Jesus Christ we pray. *Amen.*

**All: May the Lord watch over our going out and our coming in, from this time forth and forevermore. Amen.**

*The liturgy may conclude with a festive meal or other entertainment.*

*Because the names of the Magi are legendary, CMB also stands for Christe, Mansionem Benedica which means Christ bless this house.*

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